

VZCZCXRO3009
RR RUEHBZ RUEH DU RUEHMR RUEHRN
DE RUEHDR #0632/01 2670426
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 240426Z SEP 09
FM AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 8888
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE
RUEHJB/AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA 2978
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 3514
RUEHLGB/AMEMBASSY KIGALI 1440
RUEHMS/AMEMBASSY MUSCAT 0112
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 1389
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO 0326
RUEHSM/AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM 0330
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 0506
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
RHMFISS/CDR USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE
RHMFISS/CJTF HOA//J3
RUEPADJ/CJTF-HOA J2X CAMP LEMONIER DJ
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEHDS/USMISSION USAU ADDIS ABABA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 DAR ES SALAAM 000632

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR AF/E: JTREADWELL; INR/RAA: FEHRENREICH; NSC
FOR MGAVIN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/22/2019

TAGS: [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [UN](#) [TZ](#)

SUBJECT: ZANZIBAR: ELECTION MANAGERS PESSIMISTIC

REF: A. (A) DAR ES SALAAM 628

[1](#)B. (B) DAR ES SALAAM 618

[1](#)C. (C) DAR ES SALAAM 582 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: A/DCM Carl B. Fox for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY AND COMMENT: The Zanzibar Electoral Commission (ZEC) and UNDP (which is funding, training and overseeing the technical aspects of the electoral process in Zanzibar) both are quietly warning us that the October 2010 elections in Zanzibar will fail absent some kind of political reconciliation. An earlier dust-up between ZEC Commissioner Kassim Ali and Zanzibar ID Director Mohammed Juma Ame almost ended with the ZEC leader being fired by Zanzibar President Karume. From a technical standpoint, so far the electoral mechanisms are the strongest they have ever been in Zanzibar. The question remains whether Zanzibar politicians from both opposition CUF (Civic United Front) and ruling CCM (Swahili for "Revolutionary Party") will let voters decide their leadership. END SUMMARY AND COMMENT.

"POLITICAL RECONCILIATION NEEDED FOR 2010 ELECTION TO BE RELEVANT"

[1](#)2. (C) On September 17 Zanzibar Affairs Officer paid a visit to Karna Soro, Director of UNDP activities in Zanzibar. Visibly under pressure, the normally calm and easy-going Karna appeared edgy and irritable. Karna bluntly told ZAO that he thought the Zanzibar electoral process, and in particular the "2010 voting exercise," was largely irrelevant. CCM would hang onto power at any cost. CUF would put up a fight, but would ultimately be quashed by security forces, he predicted. Karna said he remembered vividly the atmosphere in his native Cote d'Ivoire before and during the coup. He also spent most of his career running electoral programs in war zones, he said, and the "eyes that he sees in Pemba" have the look of people who are not afraid of sustained conflict.

[1](#)3. (C) Karna said he was speaking as a friend, not in his capacity as UNDP Zanzibar Director. Officially, the UNDP would oversee the "best damn election in Zanzibar's history."

Speaking personally, he believed the foundation was already flawed due to partisanship and ill-will of both parties. "It is pointless to have a new car if you do not know how to drive it," was how he put it. He felt depressed that he and his staff might ultimately be blamed for failure despite best efforts. He was pessimistic that the larger international community would do any more than ascribe blame and carry on, "business as usual." What was needed - "immediately" - was for the U.S. to use its "considerable muscle" and begin mediation between CUF and CCM. The parties if left on their own were caught in a negative cycle and would not succeed in reconciliation. He called the CCM-CUF dispute a "tribal" one that, as an African, he said he understood only too well: Zanzibar was headed toward open warfare if local rivalries were left unaddressed.

ZEC COMMISSIONER ALMOST FIRED FOR CRITICIZING ZANZIBAR IDs

¶4. (C) Karna also informed about a dust-up within the SMZ regarding ZEC and the Zanzibar ID (ZID) Director. Even though the ZEC secretariat is made up of CCM political appointees and nominally reports to the Zanzibar Chief Minister's Office through Minister of State Hamza Juma, ZEC has been increasingly independent in its activities. As far back as February 2009, when Hamza Juma unilaterally issued a directive requiring exclusive use of ZIDs for all future Zanzibar elections, Kassim Ali at first said ZEC would "widen democracy by allowing people to use other forms of identification as evidence, particularly those who had

DAR ES SAL 00000632 002 OF 004

reached the voting age but had yet to secure ID forms" He was soundly castigated for the remark and forced to publicly backtrack. Since then, Kassim Ali has made pains to distinguish the work of ZEC from controversies relating to the partisan nature of Zanzibar ID card disbursement. ZEC's line is that it is charged with following the electoral laws of Zanzibar. If those laws prove later to be unconstitutional, ZEC cannot be blamed retroactively.

¶5. (C) Such language parsing suggests to some, including ZID Director Ame, that Kassim Ali is not on board with the Zanzibar Government's ID scheme. In mid-August, ZEC issued a press release in which ZEC Commissioner Kassim Ali went further, stating that ultimate success of the elections depended on political leaders, not ZEC (see para. 8 below). According to Karna, the ZID Director was furious, believing that Kassim Ali basically shoved blame for growing unrest in Pemba on Ame's shoulders. As was evidenced during the meeting between Ambassadors of the "Friends" Group and Karume (ref C), Ame, who was ZEC Chairman prior to Kassim Ali, enjoys a close relationship with Karume. Karume reportedly was not pleased by ZEC's press release either, and, when Ame complained, Karume reportedly ordered Kassim Ali fired. Karume only relented when Chief Minister Shamsi Nahodha and others weighed-in with the argument that firing the ZEC Chairman at the start of voter registration would arouse the international donor community and suggest electoral wrongdoing at the outset.

¶6. (C) Since then, Kassim Ali has tried to remain out of the public eye. His focus has been on the technical aspects of keeping twenty registration centers on two islands open seven days a week through January, amidst power cuts, criticism from all sides and sporadic civil unrest. ZAO visited ZEC September 19 and spoke with ZEC spokesperson Idrisa Jecha, the only man left at the normally busy office because "all hands on deck" were out in the field. Idrisa expressed disappointment with the hostility displayed against ZEC since the resumption of voter registration September 12. Problems with creating a Permanent Voter Register were not technical, but political he said. He predicted "chaos" at the polls in October 2010 if both sides continued the way they were going.

¶7. (U) On September 21 ZEC issued a press statement that

contrasted the relative success of voter registration in the main island of Unguja with that in Pemba: since the re-start of registration, 7,634 were registered in Unguja while only 852 were registered in Pemba. "ZEC appeals to all people who may miss registering as voters in this first phase to be patient and tolerant as ZEC plans to have a second phase of voters' registration."

ZEC PRESS RELEASE

18. (U) Begin text of August 24 ZEC Press release (translated from Swahili):

"Declaration of the Zanzibar Electoral Commission on the Problems of Registration of New Voters and the Improvement of the Voters Register in Pemba"

To Members of the Press:

As you well know that on August 3, 2009, the Zanzibar Electoral Commission (ZEC) was forced to stop the voter registration process in Pemba Island.

ZEC was forced to do so because of the following reasons:

(a) Qualified registration candidates stopped entering the registration booths

DAR ES SAL 00000632 003 OF 004

(b) People remained outside instead of entering the rooms to ask to register to vote. They (whoever they were) would not let other people enter to register.

(c) In these incidents there were indications of violence in the registration centers.

In order to quell the possibility of violence and to save the people who were in the centers, including voter registration officials and their tools, the Commission thought it best to close those voting centers.

The registration centers were opened again on August 4, 2009, but there were no changes (to the situation). As it was on August 3, it was the same on August 4. This situation caused the Commission to close the centers to date.

A great deal of effort is being put into seeking a solution to this problem of people who want to register not being allowed into the centers. There were hints here and there about the cause of this. Some said that the residency IDs were a problem. Others rejected that notion.

On August 17, ZEC decided to meet with leaders of the various political parties at the District level who were in Pemba together with the stakeholders.

The purpose of the meeting was to try and get their viewpoints on how to solve the problems faced in the voter registration exercise.

On August 18, 2009, ZEC also met with the Honorable Regional and District Commissioners who are stationed in Pemba with the aim of searching for a solution to the problems that had arisen.

Dear Members of the Press:

In each of the two meetings, the delegates were given ample opportunity to share their views even though they differed on many things. The district political leaders recognized the fact that the issue that was stopping the registration of voters was the need for residency IDs during the registration exercise.

At the meeting we had leaders who said that the public were given those IDs, and there were leaders who said that the public were not being given the forms to request residency IDs from the Shehas.

In all honesty, there was no real help we received from the meeting. All we could say was that the leaders differed among themselves. Some of them wanted us to register the voters while others urged us not to begin registering voters until every last person had received a residency ID.

Dear Member of the Press:

On the part of views from the meeting with the Honorable Regional and District Commissioners, there was something that stood out. These leaders had a unified position on the matter, and they wanted ZEC to adhere to its laws and to begin to register voters. They promised to provide security and peace.

All in all, although there were differing views, it was apparent that the issue of IDs for Zanzibari residents was the main reason behind failure to register voters.

The Views of the Commission:

As a result of the various meetings with the local leadership, ZEC sees the voter registration exercise problems

DAR ES SAL 00000632 004 OF 004

as being political rather than anything else. Therefore, there is a need for the political parties, politicians and the Commission to solve the following issues:

(a) Of members of the public not coming to the centers to register

(b) Of those members of the public who want to register but who are not being allowed to register.

ZEC has no problems in executing its duties; it has enough supplies for the exercise and the registration officials are diligent. The issues that stop some members of the public from entering the voter registration rooms are out of the scope of ZEC.

The main point ZEC is trying to make is that with every passing day there is less possibility of registering people more than once. Also, if there is no solution found to this problem and the people are not registered then the foundations of democracy for this country will be shaken. Registration is an imperative step in the election process.

For yet another time, ZEC is asking the political parties together with government agencies to fulfill their joint obligations. They must ensure that the people who deserve registration are found so that the Commission can accomplish its duties of registering and then observing the voter exercise in the land.

Thank You.
Khatib M.K. Mwinyichande
Chairman
Electoral Commission
Zanzibar
August 24, 2009

END TEXT.

